



AOT in Action

TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!

Issue 113 – June 19, 2006

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from the Director:

Good morning.

I am pleased to announce that 68 of our partners throughout the state received some great news this week, as Governor Napolitano announced the recipients of FY 07 Teamwork for Effective Arizona Marketing (TEAM) grants. In total, AOT is awarding \$1.4 million in matching grants next fiscal year. As one of AOT's longest-running and most successful programs, TEAM is a critical part of statewide tourism promotion, and contributes to valuable programs that benefit our state's economic development. For more information on the TEAM program, please visit www.azot.com. Congratulations to all of the recipients!

This week marks the first official day of summer, and I hope that everyone has the chance to get out and enjoy Arizona. Whether you want to float around a lake in a houseboat, or explore the great outdoors on a hike, relax at a first-class resort or play a round of golf, the Grand Canyon State has it all. For more great vacation ideas, visit www.arizonaguide.com, or check out our summer specials at www.ArizonaVacationValues.com.

Have a good week.

Margie A. Emmermann
Director
Arizona Office of Tourism

AOT News Flash

Arizona Media Marketplace

Last week, AOT held an in-state media marketplace, which was designed specifically for in-state travel and tourism writers to learn about what is new and exciting throughout the state. Twenty partners from around the state joined AOT and had the chance to pitch story ideas to the 37 writers in attendance. Some of the publications represented included the Arizona Republic, Arizona Highways and Phoenix Magazine, to name a few. For more information on details of the marketplace, please contact Heather Koncilja at hkoncilja@azot.gov.

AOT Staff Honored with Fellowship

Dawn Melvin, Native American Tourism Development Manager at AOT, was awarded the George S. Mickelson Memorial Fellowship by the Western Governor's Association (WGA). Governor Janet Napolitano selected Dawn to receive this prestigious honor and presented her with the award last week at the gala dinner during the WGA meeting in Sedona. As the outgoing chair of this organization of 13 western states, Governor Napolitano had the opportunity to select the award winner. This fellowship is named in honor of the former South Dakota governor who served as WGA's chairman in 1991 and died tragically in a plane crash in 1993. His colleagues created this fellowship in recognition of his dedication to the West and his commitment to public service. This fellowship is awarded to a deserving state employee for education and training connected with an innovative program and for furthering the employee's competence in public service. Dawn will have the opportunity to take educational courses and expand her knowledge of public policy and emerging issues in public service and state government.

\$1.4 Million in TEAM Grants Awarded

Last week, AOT Director Margie Emmermann joined Governor Janet Napolitano in recognizing the recipients of AOT's Teamwork for Effective Arizona Marketing (TEAM) grants, a program that enables communities and organizations throughout Arizona to promote their tourism offerings. TEAM grants fund advertising, public relations campaigns, research and strategic planning and other tourism-related marketing. The grants are awarded to communities, regional tourism partnerships, tribal entities and statewide associations that meet the program requirements and are able to match the requested funds. In FY 07, 68 communities, including five Native American organizations, will be impacted by the 49 grant awards, which range from \$1,564 to \$130,000. The total amount of TEAM grant award monies to be distributed for fiscal year 2007 is \$1,445,513. Communities in regional partnerships have pooled their resources to market as a region, thereby increasing the amount of funding they are eligible for and offering tourists a regional perspective of their destination. A total of 10 regional partnerships applied for TEAM Grant funding in fiscal year 2007. For more information, contact Karen Bult at (602) 364-3708 or kbult@azot.gov.

Register Today for the 26th Annual Governor's Conference on Tourism

The 26th annual Governor's Conference on Tourism will be held this July 10-12 at the Loews Ventana Canyon Resort in Tucson. The conference will offer chances to interact with members of the tourism industry from throughout Arizona and hear about past success and plans for the future. AOT's international representatives from Germany, the UK, Mexico, Japan and Canada will hold sessions, and Margie Emmermann will open the conference on Tuesday with AOT's "State of the Industry" presentation. Early registration rates end this Friday, so register online today at www.aztourismconference.com or call (602) 265-2252 for more information.

Rural Tourism Development Grant Program Fiscal Year 2007 – Coming Soon!

The release of the Rural Tourism Development Grant Program (RTDGP) guidelines for fiscal year 2007 is coming soon! The primary objective of the competitive grant program is to provide coordinated funding for tourism related infrastructure projects. These funds assist rural economic development through tourism to strengthen the regional and local economies and expand tourism in rural and Tribal communities throughout Arizona. The primary function of the infrastructure project must be tourism development and the project must be designed to initiate economic growth and enhance future tourism development. For more information, please contact Karen Bult at kbult@azot.gov.

Trippin' with AOT

Register Now for the 9th Annual Arizona Showcase in Hermosillo

The Arizona Office of Tourism will hold the 9th Annual Arizona Showcase October 4-5, 2006 in Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico. This event promotes fall and holiday shopping, attractions and accommodations throughout the state, with a special emphasis on family travel this year. On the first night of the event, a trade show for travel agents and media representatives will be coordinated, followed by a charity fashion show with local models - specifically targeting high income families and individuals with a strong propensity to travel on the second night. The cost to participate varies from \$800 - \$2,000 depending on type of supplier and level of participation, plus travel expenses. Sponsorships are also available. The deadline to participate is September 1, 2006. Early booking discounts apply. Please contact Cathy Clifton at cclifton3@cox.net for more information.

Industry News

Call for Entries: Arizona State Committee on Trails Photo Contest

Arizona State Parks is calling for nominations of your own unique vision of Arizona's trails in the Arizona State Committee on Trails (ASCOT) Photo Contest. The contest will

celebrate the beauty of Arizona and the varied experiences of trails and trail users. Guidelines to submit photos to the contest are:

- All photographs must be taken in Arizona after January 1, 2000.
- All entries must be accompanied by a photo release form (download at azstateparks.com).
- All entries must be postmarked by July 15, 2006, and sent to:
Arizona State Parks
1300 W. Washington St.
Phoenix, AZ 85007
Attn: ASCOT Photo Contest
Or e-mailed to:
ascotphotocontest@gmail.com

Prizes will be awarded for the best photos of trails in Arizona and include an Arizona State Parks annual pass and Trails Guides. A panel of judges of ASCOT members and an artistic professional will choose contest winners. Print photographs must be four inches by six inches and may be either color or black and white. (Arizona State Parks requests that all contest participants retain their photo negatives, as winners may be asked to send their negatives to Arizona State Parks for reproduction.) Submitted photos will not be returned. For more information about the contest, visit www.azstateparks.com/partnerships/trails/statetrails.html (Press release, 6/6)

Regional Roundup: Colorado

Colorado and communities statewide stand to benefit financially from \$19 million earmarked to promote tourism marketing, perhaps generating more than \$200 million a year in sales tax revenues, experts say. This week, Gov. Bill Owens signed a bill that boosted the state's tourism marketing budget from \$5.5 million last year to \$19 million as of July. The additional tourism marketing money comes from gaming revenues that would have gone to the state's general fund. (www.DenverPost.com, 6/6)

News and Trends

The combination of adventure during the day and soft beds, fancy foods and relaxation at night is what more adventure travelers are seeking today--not surprising, given that today's typical adventure traveler is a 47-year-old woman, according to the Web site of Marybeth Bond, a travel consultant and editor of TravelGirl Magazine. The changing demographic means that more travelers today are opting for "soft " adventures, like kayaking or river rafting, hiking or trekking, rather than "hard" adventures, like scaling a rock face in Arizona, said Jim Forberg, chief operating officer of Unicomm, a company that organizes adventure travel expos. Adventure travel is expected to increase 10 percent this year, becoming a \$55 million business, and making it the fastest growing segment of the travel industry, according to the Adventure Travel Trade Association. (Page 12, J, Miami Herald)

Older Consumers Flex Their Muscle and Money Online

Senior citizens, who generally sat out the Internet's first big commercial push, are helping to feed the surging Web economy, says The New York Times in an "E-Commerce Report." Many older online users now have a few years of Internet surfing behind them--enough confidence to click the "buy" button. Among the sites that have been buoyed by this group is Travelocity.com, owned by Sabre Holdings, which became one of the first big Internet companies to woo them members of the AARP. The agency created a version of its site specifically for the organization, AARP Passport, at www.travelocity.com/aarp. Travelocity offers exclusive perquisites to AARP members on the site, like discounts on flights and hotels, cruise-ship cocktail receptions and AARP assistants dedicated to helping members during their cruises. (Page C8, New York Times, 6/12)

Hotel Check-In

The remaking of downtown Los Angeles will gain a crucial missing piece today when developers unveil plans for a 1,000-room hotel complex--including a Ritz-Carlton and a Marriott Marquis--for the convention center. Rising 54 stories, the \$750-million project would be one of the largest buildings in Los Angeles at 2 million square feet. The proposed 124-room Ritz-Carlton would be the first five-star hotel downtown and, with the largest ballroom in the city, the planned 876-room Marriott Marquis would fill a void as a business meeting hub at the convention center. The hotels are to be topped by 216 luxury condominiums and are scheduled to open in 2010. (www.LosAngelesTimes.com/Business; Pages D5, Wall Street Journal; C6, New York Times)

Marriott International is transforming its hotel bars into constantly evolving parts of the lobby, where guests can eat an omelet in the morning, conduct a meeting in the afternoon and have a martini at night--all in the same classy place--thanks to sliding walls, disappearing backs of bars, and subtle lighting and music changes. The firm's executives have dubbed it "A.M. comfort, P.M. cool." The idea is to make the lobby--a place where guests weren't spending money--a destination with plenty of opportunities throughout the day for guests to employ their expense accounts. (Page D1, Washington Post, 6/12)

Holiday Inn Hotels and Resorts has launched a multi-faceted, \$33 million marketing campaign designed to spur travelers to "Look Again" at the well known chain. The Look Again "campaign reinforces the strengths of today's Holiday Inn and prompts guests to 'Look Again' to see how the iconic brand they think they know has continued to evolve to meet their needs," said Mark Taylor, senior vice president of Brand Management for Holiday Inn Hotels and Resorts in the Americas. The campaign aims to overcome a perception that Holiday Inn is exclusively a family-oriented, leisure hotel, while awareness of its full-service business amenities do not resonate as strongly. (www.TravelWeekly.com, 6/8)

Regional Roundup: Las Vegas

The number of travelers who visited Las Vegas fell flat in April, the second consecutive month in which visitor volume increased by just 0.3 percent. The city still welcomed more than 3.3 million out-of-town guests, and the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority's research director said two straight months of so-so growth does not suggest that the local travel industry has hit a plateau. "(Two months) is too short to be a trend," said Kevin Bagger. But an East Coast gaming analyst cautioned that Las Vegas would have trouble matching its historic growth should the U.S. economy further weaken. (www.LasVegasReview-Journal.com/Business, 6/13)

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